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The Participation Forum*

April 25, 1996

Topic: Engaging Civil Society and Governments on the Greater Horn of Africa

The Greater Horn of Africa Initiative has received well-deserved attention recently in Washington, not only on its own merits but also because it has permitted USAID to test some new ways of doing business. These include taking seriously our rhetoric about local ownership and working in teams to provide coherent responses that cross borders and transcend the usual divisions between relief and development assistance. The eighteenth session of the Participation Forum featured Gayle Smith, who recently completed an extensive consultation process throughout the region as USAID's point person for the Greater Horn of Africa Initiative. She described the initiative and drew out some themes on participation. Pat Rader, Director of the Greater Horn of Africa Task Force, told how the effort appeared in USAID/Washington. Dick McCall, the Administrator's Chief of Staff, who has played a key leadership role on behalf of the Administrator in this initiative, highlighted a few points before the discussion session. All presenters grappled with the basic question of what citizen participation means in the context of a high-level regional initiative. E-mail on this session started arriving as soon as the topic was announced, and comments from attendees made for a lively Forum.—Diane La Voy, Senior Policy Advisor for Participatory Development

Concepts behind the Greater Horn of Africa Initiative

Gayle Smith

The Greater Horn of Africa Initiative got started a couple of years ago because the humanitarian needs of the 10 countries of East Africa and the great lakes region are skyrocketing. The United States is spending twice as much money on relief—on a reactive response—than we are investing in development. Also the crises in the region are inextricably linked. What is going on in Rwanda cannot be isolated from what is going on in Zaire, Burundi, and Uganda. Similarly, the crisis in Sudan is linked to what is going on in Eritrea, Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya, and surrounding countries.

The Participation Forum is a series of monthly noontime meetings for USAID personnel to explore how to put into practice the Administrator's mandate to "build opportunities for participation into the development processes in which we are involved" ("Statement of Principles on Participatory Development," November 16, 1993). Guest speakers from in and outside of USAID describe their experiences and enter into a general discussion of the theme of the session. A summary of the meeting is disseminated within USAID by E-mail, and readers are encouraged to engage in an E-mail dialogue. E-mail should be directed to Diane La Voy, using either the USAID directory or INTERNET, as DLAVOY@USAID.GOV. Printed copies of the Forum summaries will be distributed to participants and attendees from outside of USAID and others interested in participatory development. The Office of Health and Nutrition's Environmental Health Project (EHP) arranges logistics, maintains the mailing list, and prepares the Forum summaries.

We needed to come up with some way of tackling both the problems in the region and our own problem, i.e., that we were spending more after the fact than before.

After USAID Administrator Brian Atwood traveled to the region in May 1994, a concept paper was written proposing that a two-pronged initiative be established concentrating on crisis prevention and food security. Humanitarian needs in the region are overwhelmingly for food, and overwhelmingly for famines, most of which are manmade.

The “relief-to-development continuum” concept in essence means not to look at a crisis in terms of discrete phases—emergency, rehabilitation, and development—but to provide emergency assistance in such a manner that both relief and development are outputs. The assistance saves people but also enables local people to run their own affairs. On the development side, it also means investing resources to prevent conflicts or crises in the future.

The concept paper for the initiative discussed who USAID's regional partners might be and proposed that we work with what was then called the Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD), a regional body that was set up in the 1980s. Other partners include other U.S. government agencies as well as both international and indigenous PVOs, the private sector, and research and professional networks. The paper proposed that USAID should take the lead in this initiative but that we would also engage the State Department, the Department of Defense, the intelligence community, the Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Information Agency—the whole spectrum of agencies that are involved one way or another in these crises.

Several thousand refugees from southern Sudan have fled to northern Uganda. The conventional way to deal with such a situation is for one agency to carry out development projects in northern Uganda and for another to maintain a relief program for the southern Sudanese refugees. For example, USAID's Africa Bureau might fund the development projects for the Ugandans, and the Bureau of Humanitarian Relief might provide refugee assistance to the southern Sudanese through the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) with no connection between the two efforts.

The USAID Uganda mission has just sent us a proposal for a program funded by a donor consortium, which would simultaneously work with Ugandans, the host community, and the refugees, to render them essentially self-sufficient in food over a five-year period. This arrangement reduces some of the tensions that often come about between refugees and host communities and lays the groundwork for the southern Sudanese refugees to be more productive and in better shape when they go home, rather than completely dependent. In five years' time, if the program works, the budget item for maintaining X thousands of people on relief indefinitely can be cut. This is not rocket science, but it is a great improvement over the way we normally work. We tend not to take a long-term perspective and we tend to apply bifurcated, segmented approaches: I do relief, you do development, you do politics, and never the twain shall meet.

Consultation

One of the central elements of the Greater Horn of Africa Initiative has been, and we hope it will continue to be, consultation. As soon as the concept paper was completed, we proposed that the next step was to carry out consultations in the field with governments at both the leadership level and the sectoral level, with international and local NGOs and, most important, with our missions and country teams. The initial response to that idea, with some exceptions, was, “Do we really need to do that? We've got to do something. We've got to get moving. We've got to deliver on this. It's a presidential initiative.” We insisted and eventually got our way. These consultations were supposed to take a couple of weeks but actually took three months.

We convened 68 meetings in which we presented the concept paper and asked for critical feedback. We presented it and asked people to let us know if we were off the mark. There's a tendency to think that consultation means I ask you what you think, and then I go back to my office. We were trying to ask people what they thought, stick around long enough to listen, and then incorporate their suggestions into our approach.

As a result of this consultation, the basics of the initiative didn't change, but it was fleshed out in an extraordinary way. The process took a considerable amount of time. I was involved almost exclusively in it for three months.

Was it worth it? Absolutely. We learned a lot, and the initiative shifted from something that had been invented in USAID/Washington to something that others began to feel like they had some say in and some ownership of.

Partnership

We are struggling with partnership. At the regional level, we have some exceptional partners. The region is going through a fundamental change. Formerly alliances were based on opportunism—in other words, you're the enemy of my enemy, so let's be friends, or let's join forces because we can get more money, or whatever it might be. Now alliances are increasingly formed on the basis of a common strategic vision of the region. The governments in the region recognize that their own stability is dependent on the wider stability of the region, that they need to begin thinking about trade and cooperation, and that, at the political level, some of the best ideas about what to do vis-a-vis Somalia, Rwanda, Sudan, and so on, come out of the region. Quite often they have better ideas than we do.

We say we want to carry out the initiative in partnership with them. At one level, we have succeeded. We are learning to consult much more, to keep them informed, to take their advice. At another level, we have a long way to go before we recognize that these people are our equals. Despite our intentions, we all too willingly believe that we know what they need to do. There's a degree to which racism plays a profound role. It's a real struggle for people to fully embrace the notion that we are talking to equals and that it's their region, not ours.

The IGADD, which I mentioned earlier, had begun to reorganize before the initiative started. It was something that President Issaias of Eritrea and Prime Minister Meles of Ethiopia had on their radar screens the minute they came to power. Many USAID documents will say that one of the successes of the Greater Horn of Africa Initiative has been the revitalization of IGADD. We want to take credit, but really cannot. Their regional effort and our initiative converged. We're a bit quick to say, "Look what we did." Sorry. It would have happened with or without us. Real partnership means giving credit where credit is due.

Ownership

Another concept we talk about a lot is ownership. A good example of how "ownership" often works in practice comes out of Ethiopia. Generally, when a government is negotiating with the World Bank, it first negotiates a policy framework paper, which is essentially an overarching plan for the country's economy over a certain period of time. In actuality, the Bank drafts it and the country signs it, but it is "owned" by the government. The Ethiopian government proposed developing their own framework. They did so, but the negotiations were very rocky. Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles's conclusion, stated at a GCA meeting, was that to the World Bank "ownership" means that the Bank defines its framework, the country defines its framework, and then they negotiate the Bank's framework. Since that time, the government of Ethiopia and the World Bank have negotiated the government's policy matrix, and together the two have achieved an extremely high level of true partnership.

We say we want government ownership of processes; we say we want governments to coordinate us rather than our coordinating them. However, we all went ballistic when the government of Rwanda took the initiative of expelling some NGOs. Now, they did it in a style which, in fairness, had a few bumps in it. But style aside, they are the government of Rwanda; they had 160 plus NGOs; it was completely unmanageable. They took the decision to reduce the number. When something happens that we don't like, do we say, "Well, you can own it so long as you're doing what I like"? It's a real test for us to see whether we mean what we say.

Another example is the food and food security issue. Increasingly governments and NGOs in the region (and if you talk to local farmers, they say the same thing) believe that the international community is dumping too much food aid for humanitarian relief. Regional governments are counter-proposing monetization, food for work, and so on. Do we in USAID say, "Let's engage and talk about it," or do we instead say (as in a meeting we just had), "Okay, we'll accept some monetization, but here's how you have to do it"? Are we ready to meet them halfway? On issues like this we'll be tested.

Recently the donors in the region initiated a meeting, invited some ministers, and came up with a regional food security plan. This plan will end up on your shelves sometime in the next year, and, if we move to a new building, you'll take it with you and put it on another shelf, but it will never get used. The reason is that it's not locally owned.

Local ownership takes a lot of time, and we are very impatient: "They need to have a food security strategy now! Where's their food security strategy?" The reality is that these countries have been grappling with war and famine for centuries. It may well take them four or five years to put together a food security strategy. A regional food security strategy could take a lot longer. If we push and insist that they have a food security strategy to meet our deadline because we've got to get document X in, are we going to get ownership? No. We're going to get governments and NGOs doing things to meet our standards.

The ownership issue also comes up in the initiative's effort to work with NGOs. Our grant to IGADD includes funding for local NGOs. What we're finding is that we can't seem to fund them until they replicate in our image. So long as they're genuine grassroots NGOs with their own determination of how much time goes into management and paperwork versus how much time goes into extension work, we can't seem to get to them. What we tend to do—and I don't think it's a willful, malicious thing—is to set up a construct that goes like this: "If you do A, B, C, and D, if you can give us this and this document, if we can see CVs for your staff, we will fund you." Otherwise, we can't. What happens is that these local NGOs transform themselves. Suddenly they hire new people to write the CVs or to fill our management or funding requirements.

An experiment we are going to carry out may offer a solution to this problem. When we get a proposal from a local NGO that we can't support because they don't meet some of our regulations, we will offer to provide them with a technical consultant who will do what needs to be done. This could be an alternative to skewing the organization because of what donors need and not because of what is needed in the field.

We have said that the initiative should be African-led and field-driven. We're going to be tested on the African-led part. We'll find out how far we can compromise and how far we are willing to trust that these people know their own futures.

Balance between Government and Civil Society

One of the key themes related to partnership and participation is civil society. I really hate this term. With it we set up a construct of inherently evil governments versus inherently virtuous civil society. I'm overstating the contrast, but not by much. We tend to romanticize that the way forward in this region, which is so beset by tumult and conflict, is through the empowerment of civil society. In Sudan, the National Islamic Front was the civil society until 1989. Things weren't very rosy then. In fact, civil society has the same vulnerabilities as government. Unwittingly we have promoted an adversarial relationship between government and civil society when it would be more productive to work for balance.

There have been some colossally bad governments in Africa, but just the same Africa needs governments. Anyone who thinks governments are absolutely unnecessary should go to Somalia for a while. On balance, government is helpful. We also tend to promote the notion that civil society does not have to be accountable, because it's already virtuous.

This issue comes up in our attitudes toward NGOs. I would wager that the Horn of Africa has more NGOs per capita than any region on earth. A lot of them are international. NGOs in the

governance and democracy, conflict resolution, peacemaking, and peace-building field are also proliferating. Some of these are very good, but this has become a growth industry. They are there because of the existence of constant humanitarian crises. This huge NGO community stays for a long time, because none of the emergencies are cut-and-dried. In Rwanda, there were 212 at one point. In the 1984–1985 Ethiopia famine, 95 went in; 89 of them were still in place in 1991.

In and of itself, the presence of these NGOs is not bad. But what are the long-term implications of a small country's having 200 international NGOs? Where is the line between what government does and what NGOs do? What are the impacts of a huge international NGO community on the growth of indigenous NGOs? Do they quash that growth? Do they influence the nature and shape of those organizations? Are we, by continuing to romanticize civil society, promoting an adversarial relationship where there doesn't need to be one?

What is USAID's stance in all of this? First, we are trying to make sure that we are balanced, in terms of our interventions and our assistance. We want to make sure that our assistance at any given time in this region goes to governments, international NGOs, and local NGOs. We don't want to be all in one camp or all in the other. Second, we are grappling with how we can facilitate relations rather than take sides. In the Rwandan case, for example, many NGOs, when the government expelled them, responded by going back to their contributors. The contributors immediately came into the argument on the NGO side. That does not help.

USAID has been able to find discrete fora for a solid and growing core of both international and local NGOs and people in the various governments in the region to sit down and talk to one another without us. Also, we hope that IGADD will hold meetings with NGOs in the region without us. We don't need to be at the table.

The Need for Agency-Wide Discussions

We have a tendency in USAID to limit discussions of countries and issues to the bureau that is providing the funding. In other words, if the Africa Bureau is funding an activity and the Bureau for Humanitarian Relief (BHR) isn't, then the Africa Bureau has the discussion. But if the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) is funding something and the Africa Bureau isn't, then OFDA has the discussion. What is needed instead are full agency-wide discussions. Whether funding to Sudan is relief funding or development funding, whether Ethiopia is getting a lot of development assistance or not, all of us should be at the table for discussions. If we want to have an integrated approach, we cannot remain divided between relief people and development people.

In USAID we are grappling with how to participate fully *as ourselves*. How do we remember, if we're having a meeting, to invite somebody whose money might not be on the table but who might have an interest or something to offer? On the field side, the formation of strategic teams has brought about a radical change in this regard. I am impressed by how integrated a lot of the missions are. Many are starting to look at resources like food aid, which often gets kept in a sort of relief cupboard, more developmentally. And some BHR people in the field are saying, "If you do this ag project, you want to think about X, Y, and Z."

Making the Initiative Work in Washington

Pat Rader

The Greater Horn of Africa Initiative pushes the limits on all USAID's concepts of reengineering. It's very exciting, but at the same time, it really points out how difficult it is to change a corporate culture. When I get frustrated, I think, "Well, the good news is that you're pushing the envelope. The bad news is that the envelope's made out of steel."

When we think about participation, we are thinking about servicing the customer. But those of us in Washington are a long way from Asmara—a long way from the customer. The question for USAID/Washington is how to stay excited about doing things differently, letting Africans take the leadership, and so on when you are sitting in Washington and there's no money for travel.

One of the key issues we're dealing with in USAID/Washington is communication among ourselves—among bureaus, among agencies, even within offices—especially communication about how we do what we're doing better. Probably 80 percent of the issues that we have among our offices and agencies, and even with our field missions, arises from a lack of communication, not knowing what people are doing and why. We are trying, in a reengineered USAID, to open up electronic communication among all partners, including PVOs.

Major Issues

A major issue is tension between decentralization and empowerment in the field. It is a corporate tendency, particularly right now, when USAID is under fire, to centralize and not to be transparent. To implement an initiative like the Greater Horn of Africa Initiative means having Africans take leadership and working with them slowly over time. This is difficult to do through a centralized agency under the gun on earmarks from the Congress, where two-thirds of the resources are managed from Washington. This tension inhibits our ability to do what we want to do and have the impacts we want to have and creates credibility issues with the Africans.

Another issue is just straight turf. People have spent years in agencies that are built along office lines where the funding comes from and where employees are evaluated. It is difficult to break down the tendency to protect one's turf.

Transition Teams

The most exciting thing that's happening in Washington is what we call our transition teams. Six teams have been set up to deal with different substantive and process issues. These teams are testing reengineering in the sense that they cross bureaus, they cross offices, and they cross agencies. Our PVO partners are involved on many of them. When the transition team on linking relief and development first met, it was several people sitting around the table from the Department of Defense, the U.S. Information Agency, different bureaus in USAID, the State Department—all with their bureaucratic hats on fighting over this issue. Over the course of about a year, the people who really were concerned about linking relief and development and making it work in the field stayed, and the rest disappeared. That left us with a core of people who took their bureaucratic hats off and now are transition team members. A couple of these members have said that, as things get a little tough in USAID, the reason that they get up in the morning and go to work is that it's so exciting to be sitting across the table from people that they had a conflict with in the past and really working towards a joint product that is right, that is good.

This transition team has produced an excellent draft document on the principles linking relief and development. It explains what the constraints are (most are bureaucratic; only a few are legal) and then offers concrete recommendations on what the USAID Administrator could do in terms of policies to address the constraints.

Now the team is thinking about implementation. All of a sudden the brakes have been put on. People are realizing that the evaluations and incentives of the personnel system will have to change and that pots of money will have to be mixed. Just in the past month or so people have begun to say, "Oh, this isn't a theoretical exercise, this is really going to affect where we work and how we work and how we're trained and how we're evaluated." The period of brainstorming is exciting. Then the organization suddenly realizes that to be better, it will have to change.

As we try to keep our eye on the customer and think about African leadership we must believe that the Africans have looked at their problems in the Horn and said, "If we don't stop our conflicts, we're not going to make it." Sudanese are talking to Kenyans, Ugandans, and Eritreans. These people,

virtually at war with each other, are saying, "If we don't pull up our socks we're not going to make it." Part of the process of helping Africans to go where they want to go is for us to pull up our own socks.

Another excellent transition team that is struggling with difficult issues is the so-called "Radars Team." It's the team that deals with conflict prevention. Headed by the State Department, it has members from the Defense Department, the U.S. Information Agency, the intelligence communities, the PVO community, and the Africa and Global Bureaus. It's probably the most diverse team of the six.

The Donor Rule

What can donors do to help Africans to prevent conflict? Africans are asking themselves that, and we're asking ourselves that. But if USAID's goal is to push for African leadership and field-based programs, what can Washington bureaucrats do to help the process, rather than getting in the way of it?

The concept is that the Greater Horn of Africa Initiative will move out to the field and that REDSO/East Africa will coordinate the activities and the programs in the ten field missions involved. The role of Washington will be backstopping and policy advice. But strategy development, implementation, and communication will take place among USAID and other government entities out in the field with African counterparts. To the extent that the initiative stays here in Washington, we will have failed.

This is a very bad time for USAID. We're all overworked, and morale is suffering. While the good news is that the initiative can raise our morale, the bad news is that it is often perceived as yet another political layer on people who are just barely coping. When people break through and understand that USAID could do things differently and make a difference, it is encouraging but until then it feels like, "If I have another weight on my chest, I won't be able to get up."

The Difficulty of Doing Things Differently

An example how hard it is to do things differently concerns a line item in the Greater Horn of Africa Initiative budget to facilitate implementation. USAID missions and different private organizations smelled that money, and unsolicited proposals, from both in- and outside USAID, multiplied. We set up a number of criteria which must be met before we fund something. One criterion is that the activity must be African-led and African-owned. This is an issue, because there are U.S. entities that would really like to be first in line for this money. But we have to be clear that if we are doing things differently, it means that we are doing things differently. So missions aren't being encouraged to put old projects in new bottles and then come running in and say, "Look, we've met your principles." We are trying to say, "Is this a new bottle, or is this really restructuring the program that you have out in your country to look at regional impacts, to think about conflict prevention, to link relief and development?"

If we really had time to think about a results framework on the Greater Horn of Africa Initiative, we would have to be sophisticated about measuring results. We are not there yet as an agency. We need help from people who have thought through this process. It's a dilemma. The countries in the initiative are "good performers," and they're sending in great R2s. For example, the Rwanda program was seen as an excellent development partner with excellent results, but absolutely all results were destroyed because we were watching the wrong ball.

On the other side, some relief programs measure only keeping people alive, which is quite understandable. But are they always to be dependent, or at some point are we moving toward some kind of sustainable mode wherethey can keep themselves alive? If we take the principles of this initiative seriously and worry about impacts, we have to think about results. What are the results if short-term economic gains are destroyed by civil war? What are the results of keeping children alive with no education systems, no way of self-sufficiency, and total dependence on free food aid?

Breaking Down Barriers That Inhibit Teamwork

Dick McCall

When I first started working on the Hill, the senator I worked for was chairman of the African Affairs Subcommittee, so my first voyages overseas were to Africa. Since those days I have seen a marked change in the region, particularly Ethiopia, Eritrea, Uganda, and Rwanda. The quality of the leadership and the intellectual capacity is unbelievable. I am struck time and time again about the seriousness with which they are looking at their problems and their understanding of the nature of what has precipitated a continual cycle of crisis in that region. These are extraordinarily capable and bright people with exciting visions. I am also struck by the tremendous quality and dedication of the people we have on the ground. People from the various organizational units—OFDA, Food for Peace, and so on—work as teams with an integrated sense of purpose and mission.

However, it is frustrating that, despite the crises in the region, USAID is not giving the people on the ground the tools to do the job. Fundamental to crisis prevention and management is food security. Right now our missions are getting directives from Washington to increase child survival and family planning programs. There are no food security resources. We have not empowered the missions to encourage the creativity in any way, shape, or form. As a matter of fact, the whole contracting and procurement process is more cumbersome than it has ever been.

Many donors are going through the same problems: cutbacks and lack of support from key constituencies. We seem to be unable or unwilling to look at crisis prevention, management, and mitigation in an integrated framework and to bring people together to look at what is required to deal with these problems more effectively. If we can't do that, I think it will eventually be the death knell for USAID.

If development professionals can't figure out some way to break down the barriers that separate us and to look at resources as not owned by one particular bureau or one particular donor agency, then ultimately we're all going to suffer the consequences.

Discussion Session

Integration and Performance

Participant: There's a lot of energy and time spent at the top on integration, but if we asked how integration fits into the objectives and performance of the deputy administrators or the administrator, I'm afraid I know what the answer would be. There are policy questions right at the top of the agency in terms of integration.

McCall: I agree. All too often you can get agreement on identifying the problems, but when it comes time for the rubber to hit the road, all of a sudden we're not there. It's as much a problem among the bureaus as at the top. We've got to tackle that problem.

Dealing Honestly with Agendas

Joan Atherton: My question is on the issue of representativeness in the consultation process. You talked a lot about governments versus civil society, but where we actually draw the line is national versus local government, which we tend to put in the civil society box. There's always an issue, particularly in the Africa region, of agendas, of political economy. I was wondering how you came to terms with the potential agendas of the various interlocutors with whom you consulted.

Gayle Smith: That's a good question. I've met very few people in that region or in this building or country that don't have agendas. Some agendas are good, some are not so good. One of our weaknesses in consultation is that we can't consult very well with farmers. At the end of the day we lack the language skills or the ability to go out and get dirty and dusty and also, quite frankly, sufficient commitment that that's who we should consult with. In the case of the initiative, our emphasis was more on government than it was with nongovernmental organizations. As a governmental organization, we saw the governments of the region as our primary connection.

In terms of weighting agendas, those of us who were involved in the consultation had a good sense of where our interlocutors were coming from. Some governments in the region, for example, went along with consultation big-time, because in their inside pocket is a list of \$40 million worth of projects or because they needed to get on the good side of the United States. We were pretty cognizant of that. We also understood the NGO agendas as well, because the missions gave us a great deal of guidance. These were all people they had worked with. It's hardest to read the private sector in some countries. They've got an agenda as the private sector clear and fair. Also, many of them are political animals. There's a dynamic between private sector and public sector.

What we tried to do was to record what everybody said. We composed a long reporting cable on each consultation and a final report which grouped together common themes. We got a fair amount of bull from people—not that we don't ever give that out—but we also got a lot of honest feedback.

Holly Wise: It was a terrific consultation process across the board. We hit most of the representative groups. Where we still have some more to do is with private-sector folks. We've built some good government-to-government bridges, and we're doing some important work now with NGOs. There's a lot of potential for working with private-sector folks. They've benefited from conflict, but they also have a lot at stake in terms of a stable region. We haven't fully exploited that in terms of looking for ways to pull the region together. The regional office in Nairobi has done some initial work on looking at trade barriers, on trying to join up trade associations and other representative groups.

Gayle Smith: Interestingly, one of the things that came up in the consultations, both from governments and NGOs, was that we needed to consult more with the private sector in the region, and in the United States.

If we are going to treat people as equal partners, we must be mindful of all agendas, including our own. Let's be frank. There's some good PR in this initiative. It's gotten a very high profile in a number of fora. Some of our agendas are not solely benefiting the peoples of the Greater Horn of Africa.

Predicting Conflict

Bonaventure Niyibizi: I am from Rwanda. I would like to make a comment on what Pat Rader said on Rwanda, how we made the judgment in the 1980s that, in economic terms, Rwanda was doing well, compared with other countries in the region. We were working on socioeconomic indicators, which were very good. But we did not see if the situation was going to be stable. We did not analyze the constitution, for example. We did not include in our analysis that several hundreds of thousands of people had left the country in the 1960s and were still outside. We did not analyze the impact of the internal policies in the 1970s and the 1980s. We ignored very important data, and the result was that Rwanda exploded.

I guess the next crisis is going to be in Zaire, in Burundi, in Uganda, in Tanzania, and in Nairobi. It's going to be much greater than what we saw in 1994. Are we going to react on an ad hoc basis in 12 months, in 18 months, in three years? What kind of approach can we take right now to prevent the crisis? All indicators point to a crisis. How will we react to it?

The Role of USAID Assistance Programs in Facilitating Local Cooperation

Bobbie Herman: Could you give some concrete examples, of how USAID assistance programs are facilitating cooperation, especially at the local level, to bring about the values changes and the ideational changes necessary for dealing with conflict prevention as a necessary precondition for sustainable development? What sort of strategies are we pursuing in order to make those linkages?

Dick McCall: I don't think we have very effective strategies. Europe and the New Independent States, as we're seeing with Chechnya and other areas, is rife with the potential for major explosions. I don't think our strategies for the region take that into consideration. In the Greater Horn of Africa Initiative we are trying to look at the fault lines within any given country and ensure that our present interventions—and the interventions of other external actors—do not cause tensions within society to erupt into violence. Certainly the French had a major role in Rwanda. Their policies were working at cross-purposes with what we were trying to do on the development side.

Somalia is a good example of where the donor community came together and identified in a limited way what was feasible. We put together a strategy that engaged Somalis at the local level with stringent conditions that imposed responsibility and accountability. There are areas in Somalia where that has worked very well.

We had a meeting yesterday at the Carter Center with the key international players in the great lakes region. I found it very frustrating that everybody acknowledges that the tensions are increasing. But we can't develop a policy that honestly deals with the fundamental problem. These are not refugee camps. These are safe havens for people with genocidal intentions. It's reminiscent of the humanitarian effort that basically saved the Khmer Rouge. And this is a modern-day Khmer Rouge right now, operating out of camps under the auspices of a humanitarian effort to save refugees' lives.

Gayle Smith: With respect to the initiative, there are very few programs designed or intended to find ways for people who are at odds with one another to get along. We've got to recognize that there's a limit to what USAID can and cannot do, and also to what it should or should not do. Neither USAID nor other donors in Somalia came up with a program to get two from each clan to agree. What we were able to do to a limited extent was to foster responsibility and accountability in the hopes that that might trigger something else.

We are trying to do three things. The first is to make sure we are not contributing to the problem. The second is to address questions of access to resources. A lot of the conflicts in the Greater Horn of Africa are resource based. Ethnicity is often a manifestation of a larger class or economic issue. Water rights are key in many of the countries, grazing rights, land tenure issues. Third, we should promote, provoke, and encourage an analysis at the international donor level that is deeper and more comprehensive than what we've done before. We did that in Somalia, with some success. We are trying very aggressively to do it in Rwanda. We're trying to say to the international community, "Okay, let's all wake up. Let's all agree on a common analysis of the problem and look at what our individual and collective policies are to see how we can respond." Only at that level can we address contradictions like the fact that our humanitarian food aid is feeding people who are planning for the next round of genocide.

Communications from the E-Mail Bag

An Updating Communication—One Year Later

Gayle Smith: “In March of last year, IGADD became IGAD, the Inter-Governmental Authority for Development, and signed a new Charter which includes a mandate for cooperation in the fields of food security, regional infrastructure and policy, and conflict prevention and resolution. A new Executive Secretary was appointed and is now staffing a re-organized Secretariat.

“In November 1996, USAID and State joined other of IGAD's partners at the official launching and heads of state summit. The international partners there indicated their intention to form a Joint IGAD Partners Forum to coordinate activities and efforts by IGAD and its international partners.

“Within USAID, the Greater Horn of Africa Initiative strategy has been in development and is aimed for completion by this summer. It is a challenge in that it includes multiple bureaus and, while following general USAID guidance, represents a new kind of strategy document given the nature of the initiative. REDSO/ESA now has a Greater Horn of Africa Initiative Coordination Unit, and is coordinating both the strategy development and the implementation of the Horn of Africa Support Project (HASP) with IGAD. Bilateral missions have been increasingly active, and initiative principles are reflected in several USAID strategies in the region.”

E-Mails Received Before the Forum Was Held

As soon as the topic for Forum 18 was announced (“**What Does Citizen Participation Mean in a Regional Development Effort**”), e-mail began arriving.

Frank Pavich: “I spent seven years in the Horn of Africa, 1975-77 as a Disaster Relief Officer in Ethiopia, and 1981-86 as Refugee Coordinator in Somalia.

“Working with local groups on survival problems is a major way for outsiders to play a meaningful role. The effort must be gradual, focused on the real needs (defined by the population), educational and above all, participatory. Concepts like civil society will develop as things settle down in the Horn and government and governance are respected.

“The Horn of Africa—Somalia, Northern Kenya, the Ogaden (Ethiopia) and Djibouti—is populated primarily by Somali clans. While the clans do not always agree with one another, they do cooperate in the pursuit of common interests, as for example resisting a common enemy, and survival during times of natural disaster. . . .

“Too often in the past, relief and rehabilitation efforts in this region have turned people into welfare recipients, and their leaders into blackmarketeers eager to keep the disaster rolling. This approach has to be avoided. The clans need assistance to organize their own means for dealing with environmental problems, finding the means to reduce malnutrition and improve community health, and formulating environmentally friendly economic development strategies (“African Ownership”). . . .

“Regional cooperation starts at the diplomatic level and works its way down. Like the people, the four countries involved all share the same problems. Here is where ‘cooperation’ can start, but don't look for too much to happen in this regard in this century.”

Zdenek Suda: “Concerning our image of civil society and multi-party democracy, the case of Uganda comes to mind, and, more specifically, the issue of Yower Museveni's concept of ‘Movement Politics’ and aversion to party politics. How does one deal with a regime which is essentially the salvation of a country that was mostly dead, but that does not want to hew to our idea of competitive democratic party politics? How hard do you pressure them? Should you

pressure them at all, if they are generally non-abusive of their citizens (except maybe some, such as the “Lord’s Army” operating out of Sudan and terrorizing the north) and adopt responsible economic policies? The NRM regime has restored property confiscated from Asians under Amin, and at no small political cost. Criticism of the government is tolerated. The economy is beginning to recover, to the point of being able to export food to Kenya. Given the desperate AIDS situation, the political, social and economic devastation from Obote, Amin, Obote, Okello, and the rest, and recurrent drought and unrest in the north, and now, attacks from Hutu gangs from Zaire, should we be harassing Uganda about their less-than-pure democracy? It’s something to think about, anyway (much of the same could be said about Ethiopia and Eritrea).”

May Yacoob: “What the Environmental Health Project is doing in Tunisia is related to the topic of your next forum. The objective of the ‘CIMEP’ program (Community Involvement in the Management of Environmental Pollution) in Tunisia is to change the behavior of municipalities so that their plans address the environmental health conditions of the peri-urban neighborhoods rather than specifying how many pumps can be built with a budget line item. The closest we could approach civil society at the early stages of the project was the Comite de Quartier, which is really the extension of the Ministry of Interior into the grassroots. In time, the members of the Comite de Quartier decided that the households who live in poor environmental health conditions should form their own committee to manage neighborhood level interventions to address environmental health problems.

“This effort is now being regionalized. Stakeholders from the Secondary Cities Project of USAID/Egypt are coming to see how CIMEP was carried out in Tunisia. Based on what they see and how they interpret it to their context, they will be developing a vision and work plan that will transform the current “complaints departments” of the utilities to “consumers departments.” This regional experience, although it varies from one country to the next, is still a frame of reference that is closer to the context than if the Egyptians were to visit Chapel Hill or New York where the institutional experience is very different.”

Ramon Daubon: “Civil society is more than just the many organizations that compose it; it is a space where citizens can deal with public issues separate from the government (the only legitimate SINGLE “public” institution). It is where citizens can act out their role beyond the electing of a government. So, civil society becomes that action and interaction and jostling and debating and community action and lobbying and advocating and marching and protesting and all that other stuff that citizens ought to do to deal with public issues. By its nature, then, civil society, taken as a whole, is a very NATIONAL ‘thing’. Special interests within civil society (business, environmentalists, etc.) can and should go beyond their borders and deal with counterparts in other countries on regional issues, but it’s hard for whole ‘civil societies’ to do it.

“In the Caribbean, where an official process of economic integration has very slowly progressed for 25 years, business and environmental/NGO networks are providing a great integrationist thrust on their own and pushing against the limits of official integration. I believe that this pressure will give impetus to official integration far beyond what the official planners had been able to achieve on their own . . . a case of citizens leading their governments along (as perhaps should be the case!). Anyway, I think it’s possible to further encourage and facilitate these non-official linkages and thus encourage integration—a “regional” issue par excellence—via the non-governmental route.”